

Giving the President "fast track" authority to reorganize the intelligence agencies, undermining the reforms recommended by the 9/11 Commission;

Giving the President authority to bypass Senate confirmation of the Director of the CIA and other key intelligence and defense officials, weakening congressional oversight;

Giving Federal law enforcement officials new authority to deport foreign nationals, revoke visas, and deny asylum without judicial review;

Creation of new national databases of drivers licenses, birth certificates, and criminal histories, raising civil liberties and privacy concerns; and

Expansion of the authority of the Justice Department by relaxing grand jury secrecy requirements and increasing its ability to conduct secret surveillance.

I serve on the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, and it troubles me that while that body received a referral for markup, the leadership has chose not to schedule such a hearing. The very committee that would presumably hold the most jurisdiction over this matter deferred its opportunity to make this legislation better. That does not sit well with my colleagues on this side of the aisle and it does not sit well with the families of the victims of 9/11—it does not sit well with the American people.

Furthermore, while the September 11 Commission has set forth its bipartisan suggestion for rebuilding and improvement, we cannot even move legislation that authorizes homeland security spending through a markup by the main committee of jurisdiction. These issues are indicative of a body that has its priorities misplaced.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition and tribute to the families of the 9/11 victims, there should never be a price limitation placed on effectively securing the homeland. Nor should solid legislation be ignored or thwarted in carrying out the will of the American people. For this reason, I fully support the goals set forth in the Shays-Maloney proposal that was not made in order by this committee. I also fully support the Menendez amendment that has been endorsed by the 9/11 Commission and embodies the provisions found in the Collins/Lieberman proposal, S. 2845 and the McCain/Lieberman proposal, S. 2774.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4200,
RONALD W. REAGAN NATIONAL
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am pleased to speak in support of the conference report before us. Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON deserve great credit for negotiating a bill that will provide our military—and the men and women who serve in it—the resources they need to keep America strong in the 21st century. It is always a daunting task to craft legislation that balances the needs of our services, and such an effort is

even more challenging during a time of military conflict. The chairman and ranking member have succeeded admirably in this endeavor, and the product before us today is a fine example of careful craftsmanship and bipartisan cooperation. We are proud of our men and women in uniform, and we must ensure that they are given the resources necessary to succeed in their mission.

H.R. 4200 recognizes the importance of our service men and women in the field and around the world and demonstrates the appreciation of Congress through the provision of a 3.5% pay increase for military personnel in FY 2005 and a permanent increase in the family-separation allowance and imminent-danger pay. I am particularly pleased that the measure extends TRICARE benefits to nonactive duty reservists. Our Reserve component has served the Nation professionally and valiantly even though they and their families have often had to make sacrifices. Providing enhanced access to TRICARE will provide greater stability to reservist families and will ensure that we do not lose qualified servicemembers because of insufficient access to health care.

The conference report also addresses several major problems that my colleagues on the committee and I have been working to solve. Our committee and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the House have fought for an end to a current flaw in our survivor benefits system that penalizes military spouses. For too long, military spouses have witnessed their survivor benefits drop by more than one-third once reaching the age of 62. Comparable civilian plans provide survivors a lifetime annuity of 50–55 percent of retired pay and protect against a drop in annuity at age 62. As a cosponsor of the Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act, I have supported efforts to repeal this unfair burden and am pleased that this legislation would phase out from October 2005 to March 2008 the current offset under the Survivor Benefit Plan, and increase the annuities paid to survivors of military retirees who are 62 years or older. Additionally, the agreement expedites last year's concurrent receipt improvements by authorizing full concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees rated 100% disabled.

I am, however, disappointed, that the conference report scaled back the provisions that I offered with Congressman JIM COOPER during committee consideration that would ensure greater equity and efficiency of the Department of Defense's contracting process. The agreement appears to close loopholes that have allowed the Department of Defense to avoid Congressionally mandated competition requirements and provides limited appeal rights for government employees to challenge contract decisions. Yet it falls short in other areas intended to guarantee taxpayer savings and improved efficiency in DoD contracting procedures. I look forward to working with the committee to implement H.R. 4200's provisions and to address other shortcomings in this area.

Overall, this legislation is a well-balanced approach to the needs of our Nation's military, and I commend the chairman, ranking member, and my colleagues on the committee for a fine work product.

HONORING MARY MILLS

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 9, 2004

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take time today to recognize someone who has been a true public servant in Williamson County, Tennessee. Few communities are fortunate enough to have someone like Mary Mills. But we in Tennessee have been blessed by her hard work and dedication for years now.

Williamson County Commissioner Mary Mills has consistently and without fanfare worked to improve her community. As a former educator and an active member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Commissioner Mills has been a leader in everything she does.

This week she's being recognized by the United Community Resource Foundation with a Lifetime Achievement Award, and I join the people of Williamson County in thanking Mary for her dedication.

IN SUPPORT OF BORDER
BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 9, 2004

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of an important event that I am proud to say will soon take place in my congressional district of El Paso, Texas—Border Binational Health Week. Through the efforts of federal, state, and local stakeholders and community members in the United States and Mexico, Border Binational Health Week will raise awareness and strengthen our commitment to overcoming border health challenges.

The border is a very dynamic region and a gateway for diseases such as gastrointestinal illnesses, a tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, and a disproportionate number of border residents suffer from chronic illnesses like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. It is impossible to stop the spread of diseases at the border, so we must work together, bi-nationally, to address health concerns and combat illness. In short, Mexico and the United States must be partners in achieving our common goal of solving health problems along the U.S.-Mexico border.

As part of that critical effort, I am pleased to announce that Border Binational Health Week will be held from October 11–17, 2004, and is being sponsored by the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission. The Commission, along with many partners on both sides of the border, has worked diligently in developing the agenda for this extremely important event.

The theme for Border Binational Health Week is "Families in Action for Health." Some of the many topics to be highlighted are improving access to health care, reducing health disparities, and increasing immunization rates. The week will also include community mobilization efforts, informational presentations, policy forums, models of excellence programs, and health careers and professional exchanges—all illustrating the steps to a healthier border and advancing the goals of the Healthy Border 2010 initiative.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the efforts of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission and all those involved with Border Binational Health Week, and in wishing them a productive and successful week of events.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 10, 9/11 RECOMMENDA-
TIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the National Defense Authorization Act which provides almost \$450 billion to support our troops. I want to start by thanking and congratulating the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON who worked so hard for so long to make this legislation beneficial to our men and women of the Armed Forces. While I will vote for this legislation it is truly unfortunate that a more bipartisan approach was not taken in order to include numerous important Democratic provisions which would have further benefited our fighting men and women. I am also saddened that this Defense Authorization comes at a time of such great need for our Armed Forces because they have been pushed into a war that could have been avoided and has been so poorly managed from the start. It is truly unfortunate that the brave men and women of our Armed Forces are fighting around the world while the Department of Defense is in the current state it is in. The Administration must be accountable for the actions of the Armed Forces; the unfortunate events taking place in Iraq have caused our nation irreparable harm. I only pray that the provisions in this legislation that will help protect our fighting men and women in Iraq are not the only step we take to alleviate their burden.

I am heartened by the fact that Democrats have worked so hard to put pieces of our ideas into this legislation. As I stated earlier, too many vital Democratic proposals that would have given our Armed Forces the equipment and support they need to successfully complete their dangerous missions, were denied based simply on partisanship. However, the few Democratic principles that were put into this legislation will greatly help our soldiers past and present and their families.

Because of Democrats insistence this conference report provides additional funds for force protection measures, including additional body armor, countermeasures for improvised explosive devices, and armored Humvees. It also includes a Democratic proposal that would reimburse families who purchased body armor or other protective equipment for a loved one serving overseas. Sadly, before today many families had to take the safety of loved ones serving overseas into their own hands. Those kinds of practices make it seem as if we are running a civilian militia as opposed to the greatest Army in the history of mankind. According to a report commissioned by DOD, as much as 25 percent of U.S. combat deaths might have been prevented if there had been sufficient supplies of body armor

and armored vehicles. These facts are astounding and yet truly saddening, yet another indication that this Administration sent our young men and women to fight in Iraq and never gave them the proper plan or the proper support.

This conference report also provides long overdue retirement benefits for our service men and women that Democrats have been demanding for years. Because of Democratic pressure, Republicans finally included bipartisan provisions to end the Widow's Tax, and Democrats were successful in adding provisions that would immediately end the disabled veterans tax for the most severely disabled veterans. This conference report also ensures that every member of the Guard and National Reserve called up to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan can purchase TRICARE coverage for their families after they return home. Members would be eligible for one year of coverage for every 90 days of service after they have been called up. TRICARE, the military health program is an essential need for every member of the Armed Forces, especially those with families. It seems so intolerable to me that we would allow even one member of our Armed Forces to go without proper health coverage.

This conference report also includes a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for members of the Armed Forces. It permanently increases the rate for imminent danger pay from \$150 to \$225 per month and increases the family separation allowance from \$100 to \$250 per month. It also ensures that construction of new family housing for almost 50,000 military families will proceed without delay. Again, it sickens me to think that we left these brave and proud military families out in the dark for even the shortest possible period. This conference report finally ensures that these families will receive some justice for the sacrifice they make everyday to keep our Nation protected.

I must also add that it is truly unfortunate that this Defense Authorization continues this Administration's policy of having misplaced priorities. Instead of directing more money for proper planning in Iraq, or for greater protection equipment for our troops, or maybe for greater pay raises for our troops; this Administration has decided to budget \$10.2 billion for missile defense next year—twice the request for any other weapons system. Missile defense systems are not new; in fact they have been discussed for decades. The truth is that missile defense systems have proven to be overly complex, unreliable, and often been little more than pipe dreams. Why in good conscience, in this time of budget constraints and increased need, would we allocate even more money for failed programs? There are more responsible ways to budget this money. Money from the Defense Authorization should go to our men and women in the Armed Forces who actually defend our nation instead of into programs that just waste needed funds. Also, once again Democrats have been able to restore some sanity to this issue. Because of their efforts the Pentagon's Office of Testing and Evaluation regains an oversight role and there will be some controls over this dubious program. OT&E is tasked with devising a realistic test regimen for the Ballistic Missile Defense system.

While I will support this legislation because of the support and protection it provides to our men and women in the Armed Forces, I sin-

cerely hope in the future that such significant legislation as this will involve the debate and full consideration of all necessary and relevant provisions from both sides of the aisle. The men and women of our Armed Forces and indeed the American people as a whole deserve as much. It is our duty in Congress to serve the interests of the people, it is the duty of the Armed Forces to protect and serve our national interests; one can only hope we can serve our mission as well as the members of the Armed Forces have served theirs.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY SALISBURY,
RSCJ

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 9, 2004

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor Sister Nancy Salisbury RSCJ, a distinguished and nationally respected and beloved educator who passed away on September 27, 2004 at Oakwood in Atherton, California.

Born May 15, 1930 in New York City, Sister Salisbury was the daughter of the late Philip Turner Salisbury and Ethel Walsh Salisbury. She was educated at Convent of the Sacred Heart in Overbrook, Pennsylvania, and earned her bachelor's degree from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in Purchase, New York in 1952. She received a master's degree in History from Manhattanville in 1962 and a second master's degree in Mathematics from the University of Detroit in 1968.

Sister Salisbury entered the Religious Order of the Sacred Heart in 1952 and devoted her life to the Society as a teacher, administrator, headmistress and mentor. The stature of her accomplishments are reflected in the following:

Headmistress, Convent of the Sacred Heart, New York City, 1980-2000

Chair, New York State Association of Independent Schools Accreditation Commission

Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, New York State Association of Independent Schools

Headmistress, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, 1970-1980

Head of Middle and Upper Schools, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich and New York City

Teacher, Administrator, Sacred Heart Schools: Greenwich, Grosse Pointe, Kenwood, New York

Chair, Guild of Headmasters of Independent Schools, New York City

Chair, Fairchester Association of Headmasters

Chair, Board of Trustees, Carrolton School of the Sacred Heart

Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Early Steps Member, Network of Sacred Heart Schools Commission on Goals (NCOG)

Member, Boards of Trustees: Network of Sacred Heart Schools: Greenwich, Doane Stuart; Youth Services Opportunities Program, Independent School Admissions Association of Greater New York, Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, Manhattanville College Alumni Association Member, Committees of the New York Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart

Upon her retirement as headmistress of the Convent of the Sacred Heart School in New York, Sister Salisbury spent time in Chicago where she continued her mentorship of young women entering the congregation. It was in recent years that she came to the